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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM Braden and Phillips

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SUBJECT William Colby/ Covert Operations Against Nicaragua

TOM BRADEN: Here we've got a story in the Washington Post this morning -- it's the only paper in the United States that carried this story -- and it says as follows: "President Reagan has authorized covert operations against the Central American nation of Nicaragua. According to informed officials, the President has begun to build and fund a paramilitary force of up to 500 Latin Americans, who are to operate out of commando camps spread along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border."

Now, Bill Colby, former Director of the CIA and an old-time war buddy of mine.

Bill, what do you think of that story?

WILLIAM COLBY: Well, I think it's outrageous that it's published. You know, we have a system for careful consideration of whether covert operations should be undertaken. The President has to look at them carefully. He has to be advised in writing by the Secretaries of State and Defense, and so forth. They have to then be reported to the two Congressional Committees on Intelligence to insure that the Congress thinks it's a good idea. And with that, you have to try to conduct a covert operation, under our constitutional system.

Now, if every one of these things comes out in the open -- and this wasn't the first one. We had last weekend in the New York Times the one about the Afghanistans and so forth -- and you just can't conduct covert operations...

BRADEN: Well, Bill, in the old days, when I was in the shop, it seems to me that the Director did not, at that time, have to report. He did always say -- he'd call the committee